



# The ISC Newsletter

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**Editor**  
J. Richard Greenwell

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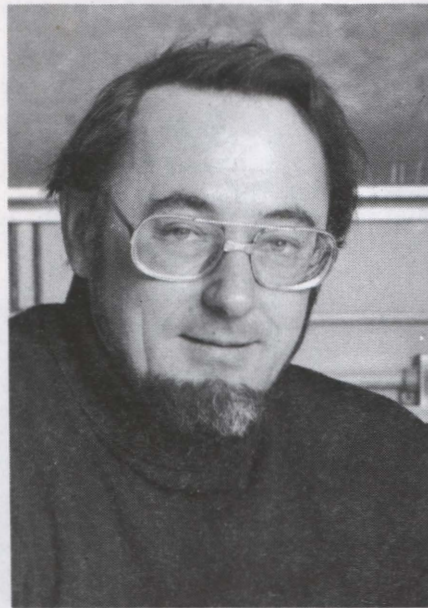
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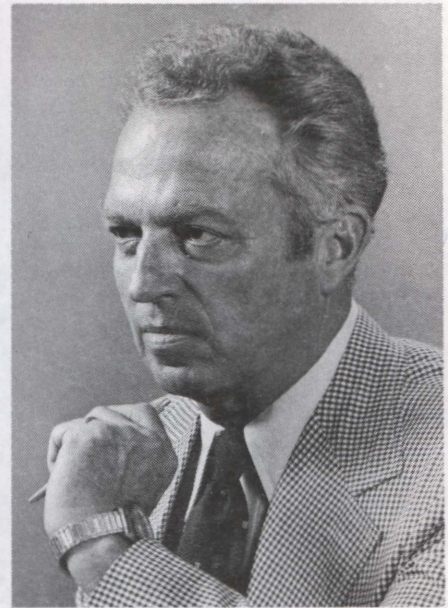
## INTERVIEW



*Paul H. LeBlond*

Paul H. LeBlond, a specialist on ocean waves, has been affiliated with the Department of Oceanography of the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, since 1965. He has also been a visiting scientist at Canada's Bedford Institute and Simon Fraser University, the University of Havana, and the Institute of Oceanology of the USSR Academy of Sciences. The author and co-author of many publications, including *Waves in the Ocean* (Elsevier, 1978), Dr. LeBlond serves on the Editorial Board of the Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, and on the Advisory Committee of the Newfoundland Institute for Cold Ocean Science. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

Forrest G. Wood is a marine biologist in the Biosciences Department of the U.S. Navy's Naval Ocean Systems Center in San Diego. A specialist in the behavior of marine mammals,



*Forrest G. Wood*  
(official U.S. Navy photo)

sharks, and octopuses, he has served as the first Resident Biologist of the American Museum of Natural History's Lerner Marine Laboratory in Bimini, Director of Exhibits at Marine-land of Florida, Director of the Marineland Research Laboratory, Head of the Marine Sciences Division of the U.S. Naval Missile Center, and Head of the Marine Biosciences Division of the U.S. Naval Undersea Center, Pt. Mugu.

Mr. Wood is the author and co-author of many technical reports and publications, two recent ones being "The Cetacean Stranding Phenomenon: An Hypothesis" (in *Biology of Marine Mammals: Insights Through Strandings* (MMC/NTIS, 1979), and, with W.E. Evans, "Adaptiveness and Ecology of Echolocation in Toothed Whales" (in *Animal Sonar Systems*, Plenum Press, 1980).

Dr. LeBlond and Mr. Wood were interviewed by Newsletter



Editor J. Richard Greenwell. Although both serve on the ISC Board of Directors, the opinions they express below are their own, and do not necessarily reflect any policy established by the Society.

Greenwell: Paul, you've been working with the marine environment most of your life. We know the oceans are very large. What is it, 70 or 75 percent of the Earth's surface?

LeBlond: Approximately, yes. But in terms of volume, the ratio of marine to terrestrial biosphere is much higher, more like 300 to 1.

Greenwell: And some parts are very deep. If we're going to look for new kinds of animals, and that's what cryptozoology is mainly about, wouldn't one expect that the best place to look is in the area that contains the highest proportion of unexplored regions, which is the marine environment?

LeBlond: That is a reasonable supposition. However, it's difficult to probe the bottom of the ocean. Basically, it's like fishing blind from an aircraft, with a hook dangling at the bottom, and hoping to catch elephants in a forest below.

Wood: The analogy I once heard may be worth mentioning here: It's like sailing in a balloon over a solid undercast with a grappling hook or a net dangling below. What you bring up tells you everything you know about what lies on the ground below the cloud cover.

Greenwell: But nevertheless, from time to time, new species or even families turn up, like Megamouth recently, and many of these finds are more by chance than by design. Is there a way of somehow increasing the probability of more chance encounters by certain types of activities?

LeBlond: One would hope so. The chance encounters that we have had with unidentified animals in the oceans have, I think, almost exclusively been at the surface, where human activity is concentrated. Submersibles usually don't have large portholes to look out of and observe what's at the bottom of the ocean.

Wood: At mid-depths it's very difficult to see anything from most of the submersibles. You have a very small viewing area.

LeBlond: Yes, and the research submersibles are very myopic. You can see perhaps 20 or 30 feet ahead with the lighting apparatus, and you can explore great depths, but all you see is just what is right in front of you, right close by. There could be all kinds of giant species behind you, pulling their noses at you, and you would never know it. It's very difficult to imagine how one would kind of comb the ocean to find out what lives in it. Sonic methods are promising. The ocean is much more transparent to sound than to light, but in order to get echoes and to identify a target with a sound beam you have to point it in the right direction, and you're forever fighting the battle between range, which requires low frequency, and resolution, which needs high-frequency transmission. Unfortunately, we can't just make the whole ocean sonically transparent by any of the methods we know of now. As a matter of fact, this is one of the most active fields of research in antisubmarine warfare at the moment.

Greenwell: Now, it's probably never going to happen that large expeditions financed by institutions are going to go out, specifically looking for large, unknown animals in the ocean.

LeBlond: Never is a long time, but I can't imagine it at the moment.

Greenwell: But don't you think that there might be ways of linking up with established activities, where people who are doing other types of research could be made more aware that they might run into these things, and be on the lookout?

LeBlond: Yes. What we can do, certainly, is to make it acceptable to see one, so that people who see something are not going to say, "Oh, my God. I've had one too many!" Likely observers could be better prepared for what they might see. But at the moment, I cannot imagine what strategy we would use to go and hunt for them. Perhaps one could lay ambushes with a large octopus pot or some other kind of trap which could be designed to capture large creatures, in the hope that perhaps one unfamiliar life form will fall into it.

Wood: There are other ways, too. John Isaacs, who died recently, was at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, and I understand that he had a plan, which never came to fruition, of putting an immense lift net on the ocean floor. It would be placed at great depths, with an arrangement such that, after it had been there for a while, it would automatically rise with the rim preceding the bag or net, so that anything that was over it would be brought to the surface.

Greenwell: How wide was it to be?

Wood: I don't know, but it was supposed to be quite large. Did you hear anything about that, Paul?

LeBlond: Yes, I think it was to be over a kilometer, a very large and expensive affair.

Wood: One of the things he did do was to put bait on the bottom with a mounted camera, so that it was focused on the bait, and would be triggered by anything

that took it. He did get a picture of a *Somniosis*, a 20-foot-long sleeper shark; only the head, actually, because the shark was so big. But that's another technique that might be used. It only gives you photographic evidence, of course.

Greenwell: Woody, about 10 years ago, you had the opportunity to be involved in this case of *Octopus giganteus verill*. You published an article in a semipopular magazine indicating that there might be some extremely large octopuses in the oceans, much larger than we're aware of. Can you give us your thoughts on the maximum sizes of these animals, and how they might live down there, their ecology, their food source, that sort of thing?

Wood: Well, the maximum spread of the largest recognized octopus known is maybe 30 feet in an extreme case. But there is evidence from various sources in different parts of the world that larger octopuses do exist. There's no question in my mind that there's a very large, unknown octopus in the deep waters adjacent to some of the Bahama Islands. What it lives on is one of the things that bothers me some. Most of the known octopods feed on crustaceans and mollusks. They may take fish occasionally, but primarily it's crabs and clams. I don't think any large clams or very large crustaceans are known in the areas frequented by these very large octopuses.

Greenwell: What depth would that be?

Wood: It's very difficult to say; there are no good data. I would presume that they normally live at considerable depths because if they didn't they would probably be known to science.

Greenwell: Isn't it possible that they simply eat more clams and crustaceans?

Wood: It's conceivable. Maybe they do. Maybe spiny lobsters occur at the depths where they live. We really don't know. You would expect a very large animal to eat large food. Of course, that doesn't take into consideration that the biggest animals in the world, the giant baleen whales, feed on very small shrimp-like organisms, but that's a different case; they're filter feeders. Certain small and little-known benthic octopods that live in very deep water possibly feed on organic detritus, but it seems unlikely that any octopuses have become filter feeders. In any event, the few apparently reliable descriptions we have of giant scuttles suggest that they are probably active predators, going for a specific prey item at any one time.

Greenwell: They go for dispersed but larger, high-energy packets. So, since you published that article in *Natural History*, there really hasn't been much more information, as far as I know, and marine biologists really don't recognize this supposed animal, do they?

Wood: No.

Greenwell: How do you feel about its recognition? What's going to happen?

Wood: I don't think anything's going to happen. At least not until one is stranded or caught, and to catch one we would probably need a giant octopus pot, a huge version of the sort of thing that Mediterranean octopus fishermen use. That hasn't been done. At one time, I thought there was a possibility of mounting an expedition to the Bahamas. I think that the likeliest places to look for them would be on the side or at the base of steep slopes, such as those that exist on the Gulf Stream side of Bimini or in the Tongue of the Ocean on the east side of Andros Island. There may well be a

great deal of rocky rubble at the base of these slopes, and if there is, I should think it would provide habitat for a variety of organisms. Such areas have never been studied. They cannot be trawled because nets would presumably get caught on the rocks. To my knowledge, a deep submersible has never been used to investigate them, nor has anybody put down large traps, much less giant octopus pots.

Greenwell: I'd like to shift gears here, Paul. Some years ago, you and John Sibert did a survey of witnesses who had seen so-called sea serpents or marine monsters in the British Columbia area, and you came up with some interesting results. One of the things I think you got a good handle on was the psychology of this whole business. Did you have any difficulties with witnesses who were reluctant to discuss their observations, particularly with professionals like yourselves?

LeBlond: Well, I don't think it was a problem in our case. We didn't take the attitude that we were professionals in this business, because we were just as much amateurs as anybody else. We had a sort of professional status from being associated with the University, and of being professionals in marine science; but there was no question of us saying: "We know all about these things, so please describe your observation." In some cases, I think this is one of the difficulties in the conflict between professionals and nonprofessionals, because there are some witnesses who are not scientists but who are professionals of another nature. They may be lawyers, accountants, or people who have a considerable degree of discipline and experience. In our survey, I think that all of the people we talked to, except maybe one, were very responsible. As far as we could tell, they were telling us what



they had seen. They were honestly puzzled and curious. That was the emotion and the attitude that came forth most clearly.

Greenwell: What motivated you to conduct the survey? Did you feel that this was something that science should look into?

LeBlond: At the beginning, it was simply curiosity. I was given Bernard Heuvelmans' book *In the Wake of the Sea Serpents* as a Christmas gift by a relative. I read the book with some amusement and increasing interest, and then I found that there were actually sea serpents and sea monsters reported off the coast of British Columbia. I was surprised to see that Heuvelmans could actually write a book about the whole subject mainly from newspaper clippings and previously published information. It seemed quite probable that there were many observations which were not accessible to him simply because they had never gotten into the press. I thought that there must have been other reports, and maybe if there were enough of them, some pattern could emerge that might enable us to learn more about these animals. As it turned out, the new observations reported to us were about equal in number as those which Heuvelmans already had for the area, about 25.

Greenwell: Woody, over the centuries there have been many new discoveries which, prior to their acceptance, were often scoffed at--a good case in point is that of meteorites--things that aren't "possible" until they happen, and then acceptance follows pretty quickly. With the precedents we've had in the past, and not just in cryptozoology, how do you feel about the function of cryptozoology as part of the overall framework of science in advancing human knowledge? Do you have any thoughts on that?

Wood: If it is accepted that

evidence does indeed exist for the reality of some of the cryptozoological critters, then questioning the function of cryptozoology has no more validity than questioning the function of other forms of zoological research. I see cryptozoological research as a manifestation of human curiosity and a human compulsion to explore the unknown, and these are the traits that have led to the vast body of scientific knowledge we have today. Science must be pursued for its own sake and its own rewards. The argument that cryptozoological research is a waste of time and effort when there are so many more well-founded and worthwhile scientific endeavors doesn't impress me. I would defy any heterogeneous assemblage of biologists to reach agreement on what is worthwhile basic research and what isn't. One need only look through the papers published in specialized technical journals--those having to do, say, with fishes or birds or mammals. Is research on the behavior of a tidepool fish or the roosting habits of a bat more worthwhile than some effort devoted to the investigation of an unknown creature, one for whose existence some evidence exists? Only a fool would maintain that we now have discovered all the animals, including those of significant size, that inhabit the planet.

Greenwell: Well, I hear that fairly often from some scientists.

Wood: New species are found every year. Now, usually these are not animals that are completely unknown. That is, they are usually not animals of a different family or order from any known, but this does happen occasionally. One example is Megamouth, the shark you mentioned a while ago, which was caught in 1976 quite by accident by some of the people who work in our naval lab in Hawaii. It's a large shark, almost 15

feet long, and it represents a whole new family of sharks. There are most certainly other large and even spectacular forms of life that we don't yet know about.

LeBlond: Can I interject something? In addition to Megamouth, there is this whole community of organisms which lives on the thermal vents at the bottom of the Pacific. They represent essentially a new branch of life in terms of their utilization of energy. If anyone had said 10 years ago that there must be things like this, it would have been dismissed outright. This is a discovery of a magnitude beyond anything that we expected to discover [see *Newsletter*, Winter, 1982--Editor].

Greenwell: They're totally dependent on the earth's energy.

Wood: That's right. They're the only organisms that can get along without the sun.

Greenwell: Some cryptozoological claims or observations are quite controversial, and of course we can also get into the fresh-water environment, into the so-called "monster lakes." Don't you feel that unfortunate labels are often applied, usually by the press? For example, the Loch Ness Monster got named that way, and once such a label is given, it's very hard to get rid of. With that label there, it's often difficult to attract serious scientists to look at the evidence because of this sort of psychological labeling problem.

LeBlond: Maybe one of the aims of our Society should be to come up with a new term which is free of the connotations of "freak." "Monster" means "freak." Originally, the word "monster" also meant something which is demonstrable, a showpiece. I don't have a new term to suggest at the moment, but if one changes the vocabulary, then one also

changes the perception.

Greenwell: Well, we probably don't have the power to change the vocabulary because of the influence of the press. They are the ones who feed the information to the public.

LeBlond: We have some power because we have already widely circulated the word "cryptozoology." A lot of people are beginning to know what it means.

Greenwell: That's true. Do you feel, Woody, that, within a certain framework, and under certain conditions, that looking for "monsters," if you will, is an appropriate, legitimate interest within the function of one's professional activities?

Wood: Yes, absolutely. One of the problems, as we touched on a little earlier, is that research funding is tight, particularly so these days. Seagoing expeditions are immensely expensive, and there are indeed many other important things for scientists to do than look for unknown animals. So, any effort along these lines is now, and is certainly going to continue to be, very restricted. Expeditions are usually dedicated to particular kinds of research, and there is very limited opportunity to digress from such efforts. As we said, it would be very worthwhile if we could motivate scientists to investigate reports of unusual animals.

Greenwell: And how would you answer statements by scientists who say that this whole business is, at the very least, a waste of time, that the Loch Ness Monster and Bigfoot, which are the ones that make the news, are nonsense, and that we're all pretty much, if not a bunch of kooks, at least daydreaming and wasting our time and possibly theirs. How would you respond to that?

Wood: I don't know of any good response. I don't know of any

way of turning such people around, short of demonstrating beyond any shadow of a doubt that the Loch Ness Monster or any of these other animals do exist.

Greenwell: Of course, we've already done that, in a sense, by producing our precedents, and that hasn't helped too much with these kinds of people.

LeBlond: I would like to suggest a response: that science, the activity that we call science, is really the investigation and discovery of nature.

Greenwell: Or natural effects or laws.

LeBlond: Or natural laws, and how the world works around us. The observation and interpretation of rare events which cannot be fitted into known scientific categories is an important part of science. The impression that a lot of people have that science must be concerned with only useful things and technological applications is, I think, a distorted view of science. Astronomy, for example, for a long, long time, had no possible practical application. Nevertheless, we still spent millions of dollars on building large obser-

vatories to try to find out what's taking place millions of light years away simply for the pleasure of discovery. It broadened our horizons, and placed us a bit more precisely within the perspective of the Universe. Cryptozoology is probably the same way.

Greenwell: Well, you said the other night at our little conference on your campus that if human beings stopped being curious about their environment, and I think you picked it up from someone else, if they stopped being curious about things, they would no longer be human beings.

LeBlond: They would have lost one of the most distinctive attributes of human beings.

Greenwell: So, we could say that cryptozoology is just another little facet of that essence which makes human beings tick.

LeBlond: That's right.

Greenwell: Well, I'd like to thank you both for your views. Do you have any other comments?

Wood: Yes. I'll send you my bill at the end of the month.

## Seattle Exhibit Continues



The "sea monster" exhibit at the Seattle Aquarium, highlighted in the Winter 1982 Newsletter, has been very successful, prompting a decision to leave it up through the autumn of 1983. ISC members in the U.S. Northwest, or those visiting the Northwest this summer or autumn will thus still have an opportunity to see it.

The Marine Science Center at Poulsbo, Washington, will be borrowing the exhibit afterwards for further display.



## Nessie's 50th Birthday



*Classic photo of Nessie shot in April of 1934 by Lt. Col. Robert K. Wilson, M.D. (Associated Newspapers photo)*

The spring of 1983 marks the 50th anniversary of the Loch Ness Monster. Not the actual animals supposedly inhabiting the lake, for they had been reported by Scots for decades and even generations earlier, but the modern metamorphosis of the Scottish "water beastie" or "water horse" into a full-fledged "monster" (see Newsletter, Winter, 1982).

The events which led to this metamorphosis began on an afternoon in March, 1933. Mr. and Mrs. John Mackay were driving from Inverness to Drumnadrochit, when Mrs. Mackay observed "an enormous black body on the lake." By the time Mr. Mackay stopped the car, all he saw were ripples. The Mackays decided not to publicize their sighting, but a friend, told of the sighting in confidence, relayed it to Alex Campbell, the young Ness water bailiff and a correspondent for the *Inverness Courier*. Mr. Campbell wrote up the sighting report and submitted it to Dr. Evan Barron, editor of the *Courier*. According to the literature, Dr. Barron read Mr. Campbell's report and stated: "Well, if it's as big as Campbell says it is, we can't just call it a creature. It must be

a real monster."

Whatever the truth, the article appeared in the *Courier* on May 2, 1983, and created a national and international sensation. It is reproduced below in its entirety as a special tribute on Nessie's "50th birthday."

### STRANGE SPECTACLE ON LOCH NESS

What was it?

(From a Correspondent)

Loch Ness has for generations been credited with being the home of a fearsome-looking monster, but, somehow or other, the "water-kelpie," as this legendary creature is called, has always been regarded as a myth, if not a joke. Now, however, comes the news that the beast has been seen once more, for on Friday of last week, a well-known business man, who lives near Inverness, and his wife (a University graduate), when motoring along the north shore of the loch, not far from Abriachan Pier, were startled

to see a tremendous upheaval on the loch, which, previously, had been as calm as the proverbial mill-pond. The lady was the first to notice the disturbance, which occurred fully three-quarters of a mile from the shore, and it was her sudden cries to stop that drew her husband's attention to the water.

There, the creature disported itself, rolling and plunging for fully a minute, its body resembling that of a whale, and the water cascading and churning like a simmering cauldron. Soon, however, it disappeared in a boiling mass of foam. Both onlookers confessed that there was something uncanny about the whole thing, for they realized that here was no ordinary denizen of the depths, because, apart from its enormous size, the beast, in taking the final plunge, sent out waves that were big enough to have been caused by a passing steamer. The watchers waited for almost half an hour in the hope that the monster (if such it was) would come to the surface again; but they had seen the last of it. Questioned as to the length of the beast, the lady stated that, judging by the state of the water in the affected areas, it seemed to be many feet long.

It will be remembered that a few years ago, a party of Inverness anglers reported that when crossing the loch in a rowing-boat, they encountered an unknown creature, whose



bulk, movements, and the amount of water it displaced at once suggested that it was either a very large seal, a porpoise, or indeed, the monster itself!

But the story, which duly appeared in the press, received scant attention and less credence. In fact, most of those people who aired their views on the matter did so in a manner that bespoke feelings of the utmost skepticism.

It should be mentioned that, so far as is known, neither seals nor porpoises have ever been known to enter Loch Ness. Indeed, in the case of the latter, it would be utterly impossible for them to do so, and, as to the seals, it is a fact that though they have on rare occasions been seen on the River Ness, their presence in Loch Ness has never once been definitely established.

Historically-inclined crypto-zoologists should note that the article in the *Courier* erroneously states that the sighting occurred in April, but that was when Mr. Campbell heard of the event; the sighting was in March. This came to light recently when England's *Daily Mail* published an article on Nessie by Clive Limpkin on March 25, 1983, which contained an interview with the Mackays.

Mr. Limpkin tracked down the Mackays in a cottage about 50 miles from Loch Ness, and obtained the first personal interview with them in 50 years. They maintain today that their sighting really happened as described, except that only Mrs. Mackay actually saw "the monster" clearly. They also answered an old allegation in the

literature that, as "owners" of the Drumnadrochit Hotel at the time, they might have had a financial interest in creating the "monster." According to Limpkin, Mrs. Mackay stated: "We never owned it. We were only tenants there for the estate. It was the brewers who owned it, and when they saw it was going to bring in all the tourists and the publicity, they sold it above our heads a couple of years later. We didn't leave through choice...You know, if I'd kept my mouth shut and never said a word, we'd have still been in the [Great] Glen."

Following the worldwide publicity which ensued following the Mackay sighting, *Nature* (Vol. 132:921, December 16, 1933) published the first mention of Nessie in a scientific publication. The author, James Ritchie, even spent a morning at and on the loch, and stated that "impossibilities" such as the plesiosaur could be ruled out. "If the evidence is to be believed at all," he concluded, there may be in Loch Ness a creature, which if not unusual in its own habitat, is unusual in its surroundings in a Highland fresh-water loch."

Although sightings had been made for decades and probably centuries before, without any attention being paid to them, the "birth" of the journalistic "monster" was phenomenal, and new sightings were given wide attention in the press, so much so that, by the summer of 1934, Ritchie conceded that "the situation is without parallel in the records of the observation of nature" (*Nature*, Vol. 134:242, August 18, 1934). Mr. Ritchie concluded that "we do not yet find it necessary to depart from our earlier suggestion that the monster may be a large grey seal."

Now, 50 years later, the drama continues to unfold (see Cryptoquote, this issue), even

with some of the same characters. Alex Campbell, now 81, retired as water bailiff in recent years, and lives in Fort Augustus, at the southwestern end of the loch. He has seen "the monster" himself numerous times over the decades. The Mackays, now in their 80s, maintain their story, shunning publicity. And the *Inverness Courier* continues to keep an eye on Nessie's appearances. In fact, as if to celebrate the occasion, Herb MacDonald, production manager for the *Courier*, observed Nessie on April 8, 1983, 50 years almost to the day that the Mackays had their sighting (the exact date of the Mackay event is not known, but it is now believed to be in late March).

Mr. MacDonald was driving by the loch with his two sisters and two friends when the sighting occurred. "There was definitely something underneath the loch that had pushed up, and this bump appeared and then disappeared again." Mr. MacDonald, 60, stopped the car, but by the time they ran to the water for a better look the object and the waves had gone. He described the "bump" (what others have called a "hump") as about a foot high and three feet long.

Research will continue at Loch Ness in 1983. Robert Rines and his Academy of Applied Science-sponsored group will be arriving there in late June with new ideas and strategies. Adrian Shine, leader of the Loch Ness and Morar Project, which has been conducting extensive fieldwork in recent years (see *New Scientist*, Vol. 97:462-67, February 17, 1983), will continue to monitor the lake with various sonar systems. Tim Dinsdale, Ivor Newby and others will also be there, patrolling and ready. Who knows, perhaps after 50 years of fieldwork conclusive evidence of Nessie's existence will be obtained.

## Message from the Editor

Membership renewals have been coming in at a regular rate. At press time, membership stands at about 300, but should be up to 500 again before long as more renewals and new members continue to come in.

There has been some confusion concerning membership periods and what publications are included. All new members processed prior to March 1, 1983, were processed as 1982 members, and were sent the four newsletters and one journal for 1982. New members processed from March 1, 1983, onward, were processed as 1983 members. They were sent no back issues (unless they ordered them separately), and this is the first newsletter of their membership. Three more newsletters and one journal will be published for 1983. New members are urged to buy the 1982

publications, particularly the journal (Volume I). The four 1982 newsletters sell for \$2.50 each (postpaid), and the journal for \$15.00 (postpaid).

All members are reminded that the Editor is very dependent on outside sources of information for items for the newsletter. Please send articles from magazines or newspapers, new or old. These serve as both a source of information to the Editor, and as a contribution to the Society's archives. News items from other countries (preferably with translations if in languages other than English or Spanish) are particularly welcome.

Members are also reminded that letters for publication in the newsletter are welcome at any time. The Editor reserves the right to shorten them or to

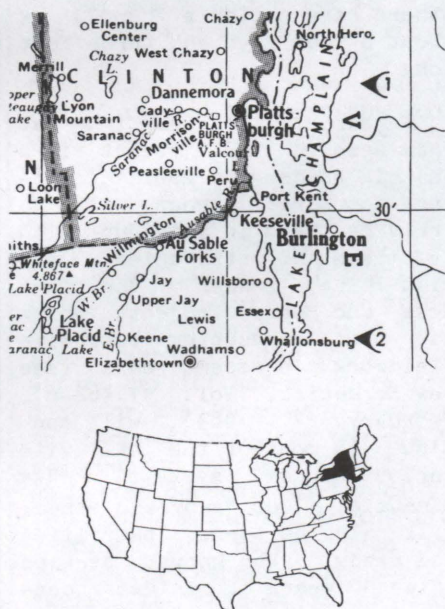
make slight changes to improve style or expressions, but not meaning. Contributions are also welcome for the journal, *Cryptozoology*. There are different deadlines for different kinds of manuscripts, as follows:

Articles	- Sept. 1
Research Reports	- Oct. 1
Field Reports	- Oct. 1
Book Reviews	- Oct. 1
Commentaries	
(only on material published previously)	- Aug. 15

Contributors should consult the journal for style and format, particularly the Instructions to Contributors on the inside back cover, prior to preparing a manuscript.

J. Richard Greenwell  
Editor

## Champ Passes New York Assembly



The so-called Lake Champlain Monster (Champ) scored another official victory in the New York State Legislature on April 18, when the 150-member, Democratic-controlled Assembly unanimously approved a Republican-sponsored legislative resolution "recognizing" its existence and calling for its protection. The Assembly resolution is identical to the one passed by the New York Senate in June of 1982 (see *Newsletter*, Autumn, 1982), and the Vermont House of Representatives in April of 1982 (see *Newsletter*, Summer, 1982).

The new resolution was sponsored by several Lake Champlain-area Republican state assemblymen, including Andrew Ryan of

Plattsburgh, Glenn Harris of Fulton County, and Anthony Casale of Herkimer County. While Assemblyman Casale readily admits that he has never seen Champ himself, he hopes the new resolution will "draw attention to the issue." The Assembly adopted the resolution just one month after its Environmental Conservation Committee passed the resolution.

The Vermont Senate is now the only U.S. legislative body with interest in Lake Champlain (the lake also penetrates Quebec, Canada) which has not sponsored a Champ resolution. Joseph Zarzynski, Director of the Lake Champlain Investigation, expects Vermont state senators to address the issue before long.



## Chessie Videotape Analysis Inconclusive

On August 20, 1982, seven Smithsonian Institution scientists convened to examine a videotape of "Chessie" -- the celebrated Chesapeake Bay Monster. The videotape was made on May 31, 1982, by Robert Frew when he, his wife, and several guests observed a large, serpent-like animal in the bay waters in front of their Kent Island home (see Newsletter, Summer, 1982).

Attending the special meeting were Frank Ferrari, of the Smithsonian Oceanographic Sorting Center; Nicholas Hotton III, Department of Paleobiology (who serves on the Editorial Board of Cryptozoology); Leslie Knapp, Director of the Smithsonian Oceanographic Sorting Center; James Mead, Division of Mammals, Department of Vertebrate Zoology; Charles Potter, Division of Mammals, Department of Vertebrate Zoology; Clyde Roper, Chairman of the Department of Invertebrate Zoology; and George Zug, Chairman of the Department of Vertebrate Zoology. The meeting was sponsored by Dr. Zug, who serves on the ISC Board of Directors. Also in attendance were representatives from Maryland's Department of Natural Resources, the National Aquarium, other Chesapeake Bay authorities, and a number of Chessie eyewitnesses and investigators. In order to avoid unwelcome publicity, the three-hour meeting was closed to the press.

Following the meeting, Dr. Zug, a herpetologist, stated: "The usual explanations of partially submerged logs, a string of birds or marine animals, optical illusion, etc. seem inappropriate for the dark, elongated animate object."

In a special report to the Editor, Dr. Zug summarized the group's observations and findings: "Throughout the videotape, the object appears (surfaces)



*Herpetologist George Zug, who sponsored the Chessie videotape examination at the Smithsonian Institution.*

and disappears (submerges). In none of the three major surfacings does much of the object show above water. Also, the object surfaces and submerges in a bobbing or vertical manner rather than a rolling above and below the surface as in most swimming animals. In two of the surfacings, a strong angular structure protrudes from the water, perhaps a foot above the surface; this angular structure is the presumed front end of the object, and was described by one of the witnesses as shaped like a[n American] football. No eyes, ears, or mouth were apparent on this projection when viewed on the videotape."

The report continues: "Simultaneous with the appearance of the 'head,' a portion of the 'back' was above the water, but only barely so. The total length of the object above the surface was perhaps three feet, probably no more than five feet. ... The estimates of 10-20 feet by the eyewitnesses derive from

a dark shadow that they assumed was a rearward continuation of the object beneath the water. The shadow was clearly evident in the videotape, but may have been the rearward extension of a wake. The eyewitnesses reported a vertical undulation of the object. This was not apparent from the tape, nor did it appear that there was a horizontal undulation. The object was producing a low wake, but the manner of propulsion could not be determined.

"All of the viewers of the tape came away with a strong impression of an animate object, certainly not some kids swimming in a plastic garbage bag ... We could not identify the object."

Besides viewing the Frew videotape, the group also examined enlargements of three 35 mm prints taken by Katherine Pennington in 1981, which supposedly show Chessie. During an early morning walk by the Choptank River, she observed three angular objects swimming in a straight line, producing a single wake. She took one photograph, but the Smithsonian group was unable to identify the object. The two other photos supposedly showed an animal's "head" in a grassy area near shore (water depth about two to three feet). The group concluded that the "head" was actually a posterolateral view of a muskrat.

Like its cousins in other parts of the world, Chessie remains both an "unexpected" and a "cryptic" animal, despite the opinion of some of the Smithsonian's leading biological scientists that the videotape, at least, probably depicts an animate object.

(For other comments on the Chessie videotape, see letter from Craig Phillips in the Winter 1982 Newsletter).



# Cryptoletters

Dear Editor:

...a "2-bit" newsletter all about you...

Cliff Crook  
Bigfoot Central  
Bothell, Washington

Dear Editor:

I have received your journal and request for renewal.

We who have worked hard and long in the field realize that credibility goes with results and not rhetoric.

James R. Spink  
Freelance Research International  
North Miami, Florida

Dear Editor:

I have received the first issue of the journal, and I wanted to let you know that I think it is quite extraordinary. The layout, editing, and contents are extremely professional. Every article is well worth reading, interesting, and thought-provoking. Never has one publication so eloquently captured the essence of the search for hidden animals. Keep up the great work.

Loren Coleman  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Dear Editor:

I have received all the publications for 1982, and I cannot tell you what a pleasure it is to see so much "updating" in so condensed a form. I also feel strongly that an identity of credibility is in the making: the presentations are consistent in format and attention to detail. / Congratulations to all

who obviously were diligent this first year of the ISC.

Nancy Crawford  
Carlsbad, California

Dear Editor:

The first issue of *Cryptozoology* was excellent. The Editor and authors are to be congratulated. And I am glad to see the word monster placed in quotes in the latest newsletter. I hope this trend toward precise language in the Society's publications will continue despite the subjects of our interest being sloppily reported and subtly ridiculed in the popular press.

Gordon Strassenburgh  
Moss Landing, California

Dear Editor:

I would like to let you know how impressed I was with the first issue of *Cryptozoology* and with the 1982 newsletters. I'm sure the Society will maintain the high scientific standard of its publications in the future, and I look forward to continued membership.

David Hughes  
School of Animal Biology  
University College  
of North Wales  
Bangor, Gwynedd  
Wales, U.K.

Dear Editor:

As a renewed charter member I want to express my thanks to you personally for making the time to answer letters and inquiries from the membership and others. Also, congratulations for producing a publication that informs the layman as well as the professional.

Glen F. McWhorter  
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Editor:

Having read the *Cryptoletter* by F. G. Wood in the Summer 1982 *Newsletter* regarding Roy Mackal's suggestion of the White River Monster being a large, male elephant seal, I offer these observations.

Although I am not a trained scientist, I have, for a number of years, researched with interest the White River phenomenon. In the summer of 1976, I visited the Chamber of Commerce office in Newport, Arkansas, and reviewed their file on the creature(s). As a result of that visit, I examined a large plaster cast (enclosed photo with my two young sons, 6 and 3 years old), which was taken from an island in the river by a local law enforcement officer. If genuine, I think you would agree, it has no resemblance to a track that an elephant seal would make.

Whatever is in the White River system, I'll wager, as Mr. Wood did, it's not an elephant seal. Not being a betting man nor a biologist, I look forward to the ongoing debate.

James R. McLeod  
North Idaho College  
Coeur D'Alene, Idaho



Cast of supposed footprint of supposed White River monster



Dear Editor:

In your report about the Walla Walla casts (Newsletter, Autumn, 1982), I was struck by the frequent assertion that a particular point could not be hoaxed, or was unlikely for hoaxers to know or to attempt. This emphasis is unfortunate for at least two reasons: first, the case for the existence of Bigfoot cannot be made to the satisfaction of doubters in this manner; second, the adoption of this defensive approach is poor rhetorical strategy.

One cannot prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that no hoaxing is involved. The points made go no further than the very reasonable inference that, if a hoaxer is responsible, then that hoaxer knows as much about anatomy, anthropology, and so forth as do the present investigators. Hoaxers are very idiosyncratic individuals, so much so that one cannot infer how such a person would proceed. For example, though it is now known beyond question that Piltdown Man was a fake there is still no agreement as to who among the possible candidates was the responsible individual: all the candidates are quite unlikely ones to play that role of hoaxer.

The defensive rhetorical strategy plays into the hands of the doubters. All they need do is to repeat in essence what I have just said. It would be much more effective, I believe, to make the same points in a different manner: to emphasize how detailed is the knowledge required to produce such evidence, if indeed it was produced by human agents. Another instance of this defensiveness is the quoted statement by Krantz, admitting that general acceptance by other anthropologists is not likely even though Krantz concludes that no other interpretation than his own is possible; this can only give the opportunity for determined debunkers to make *ad hominem* com-

ments about Krantz.

A positive strategy is sorely needed, and that should include more careful attention to documenting the points made. For example, the contention that the dermal ridges and sweat glands "could not be hoaxed, according to several dermatoglyphics experts" ought to be accompanied by an identification of those experts. One characteristic feature of what the debunkers call pseudoscience is the making of such assertions in a manner that does not allow the reader to consult the cited authority or data; I think it is vital that ISC set a much better example than that. Though these criticisms might sound harsh, I trust you will realize that they spring from a genuine desire to further the Society's ambitions, in particular by helping it to attain a reputation for impeccable reliability.

Henry H. Bauer  
Dean, College of Arts  
and Sciences  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute  
and State University  
Blacksburg, Virginia

*Dr. Bauer's point is well-taken. However, the Editor never stated or implied that a hoax was not possible. Toward the end of the article, the Editor wrote: "It is certainly not physically impossible to perpetrate such a hoax, given enough professional expertise, talent, time, and money," and that "one has to weigh the likelihood of such a conspiratorial scenario, however unlikely, against the likelihood of a living primate unknown to science, however unlikely."*

*The Editor cannot respond to criticisms of Dr. Krantz's own statements. As for paying "more useful attention to documenting the points made," the Newsletter is not a scientific publication, and thus is not intended "to allow the reader to consult the*

*cited authority or data." The Newsletter is a "news" publication, with a much lighter approach than a scholarly journal, and we should hope that the Society's scientific merits are judged by its scientific journal, Cryptozoology. The Walla Walla case is one that continues to unfold, and the Editor, with space limitations and deadlines to meet, regrets that he cannot provide all the up-to-date information on the case, including the identification of experts, in a continual manner. Some of these persons wish to remain anonymous, at least for now; the Editor has identified several experts involved in the case.*

*Dr. Bauer may be interested to know that Dr. Krantz is preparing an article for Cryptozoology which should contain much of the information he found lacking in the Newsletter.*

-- Editor

Dear Editor:

I was quite disappointed by the ISC Board's decision to adopt the okapi as the logo for the Society. I would have preferred the witty, attractive 43-year-old Manhattan bachelor. Please report to me immediately any sightings of this delightful and unexpected creature. Should you discover a herd (or pack?) of them, I can quickly form a Greenwich Village Ad Hoc Branch of the Society.

Elizabeth Ryan  
New York, New York

*While the witty and attractive 43-year-old Manhattan bachelor may be a threatened species (maybe even endangered), I'm afraid he wouldn't have qualified for the logo. This does not mean, of course, that you cannot pursue sightings of any New York creatures of particular interest to yourself.*

-- Editor



## Cryptoquote

"In the 50 years since an Inverness newspaper reported 'the appearance of a strange animal or fish in Loch Ness,' we have learned to live with such ideas as these: that matter is energy, that atoms can be smashed...that the continents are floating plates meandering around the planet, that Saturn has braided rings of giant snowballs...that light is subject to gravity because space is curved near large masses, and that there is a decipherable code of heredity contained in a substance (DNA) common to all living things from turnips to violinists.

"But it is generally considered beneath serious consideration that a large creature lives in Loch Ness.

"Because the 'monster' has been good for Scotland's tourist trade, cynics dismiss it as a fabrication. Because a willingness to construe other persons' beliefs as products of neuroses is widely considered a sign of bravery and learning, persons who say they have seen the creature or evidence of it, or who even remain open-minded about it, are said to be manifesting an instinctive human craving for myth, and the hunger of a secular age for mystery, and all that stuff...

"But it is curious the amount of faith sometimes needed, and sometimes forthcoming, to maintain a particular skepticism. It is still possible that the story of the Loch Ness creature illustrates the number of ideas people are willing to entertain in order to avoid entertaining one idea that is considered naive or otherwise out of place in polite society.

"No metaphysic will come unstuck, no moral code will be refuted, no notion of man's place under the eye of eternity will have to be revised if, say, we someday discover that a species of large prehistoric reptiles got locked in the loch by a geo-

logic accident and has been dining well on Scotch salmon ever since....But many persons close their minds against many thoughts in order to avoid being thought insufficiently skeptical.

"Of course, credulity can be costly...But skepticism can be a kind of dogmatic slumber, and the world has much to lose from an atrophied capacity for wonder and surprise."

George F. Will

(From: "Skepticism as Deep As Loch Ness,"  
The Washington Post,  
May 15, 1983).



### The ISC Newsletter

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